

Message Text

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43

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 4523

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, PA

SUBJECT: STATUS OF NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN PARAGUAY

REF: STATE 233134

1. AS LISTED IN THE CAST, ONE OF THE TOP PRIORITIES OF MY MISSION IN PARAGUAY HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE TO IMPRESS UPON THE PARAUAYAN PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OPINION THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE EXECUTIVE, CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE VIEW THE WAR ON ILLICIT NARCOTICS SMUGGLING, AND TO SECURE PARAGUAY'S WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT FOR OUR EFFORTS TO CURTAIL THE FLOW OF DRUGS TO THE US. WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS; THE JOB IS FAR FROM FINISHED. THE SUBJECT OF NARCOTICS SMUGGLING IS A CONSTANT THEME FOR PRESIDENT STROESSNER IN HIS MEETINGS WITH ME AND OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIALS. AS A RESULT OF ADVERSE PPUBLICITY FOR PARAGUAY FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF THE NOTORIOUS FRENCH-ARGENTINE TRAFFICKER AGUSTE RICORD IN PARAGUAY IN 1972, WHICH DRAMATIZED THE EXTENT OF PARAGUAYAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNA-TIONAL DRUG BUSINESS, STROESSNER HAS BECOME VERY SENSITIVE TO OUR OFFICIAL DISAPPROVAL OF USE BY INTERNATIONAL SMUGGLING GROUPS OF PARAGUAY FOR STORAGE AND TRANSIT OF NARCOTICS DESTINED FOR THE US. I

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REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT HIS STATED UNCONDITIONAL OPPO-

SITION TO THE USE OF PARAGUAY FOR NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKING WILL CONTINUE TO BRING POSITIVE RESULTS
HERE. SOME OF THESE TO DATE ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A. PARAGUAY HAS ENACTED LEGISLATION PROVIDING
FOR SEVERE PENALTIES FOR DRUG SMUGGLING AND PEDDLING.
IN COOPERATION WITH DEA, PARAGUAY HAS ESTABLISHED
A NARCOTICS CONTROL AGENCY (NNA) WHICH HAS HAD SOME
LIMITED SUCCESS IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC DRUG ABUSE
(MOSTLY CONFINED TO MARIJUANA). PARAGUAYAN PUBLIC
OPINION IS SLOWLY AWAKENING TO THE FACT THAT DRUG
ABUSE IS BECOMING A WORLDWIDE SCOURGE.

B. THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT, BY AGREEING TO
EXTRADITE RICORD TO THE US IN LATE 1972, SET A
PRECEDENT OF POTENTIALLY GREAT IMPORTANCE. THIS
PRECEDENT PROVIDED FOR THE HANDING OVER TO US
JUSTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL INDICTED IN US COURTS FOR
CONSPIRING TO IMPORT NARCOTICS INTO THE US, EVEN
THOUGH THE INDIVIDUAL HIMSELF MIGHT NEVER HAVE SET
FOOT INSIDE THE US. SUBSEQUENTLY, PARAGUAY AND THE
US SIGNED A NEW EXTRADITION TREATY EMBODYING THIS
PRINCIPLE, AND CONTAINING OTHER PROVIDISONS MAKING
IT ONE OF THE MOST "MODERN" SUCH AGREEMENTS IN
EXISTENCE.

2. ACCORDING TO RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, IT APPEARS
LIKELY THAT THERE HAS BEEN A RESURGENCE OF NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKING VIA PARAGUAY. IF TRUE, THIS
WOULD INDICATE A CONTINUING PERCEPTAL DIFFICULTY
HERE IN DISCERNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
TRADITIONAL SMUGGLING (A LONGTIME AND IMPORTANT
PARAGUAYAN INDUSTRY) AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.
IN THE EVENT CURRENT INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS SHOULD
LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL ACTIONS BY USG AGENTS (ARRESTS,
INDICTMENTS, AND/OR SEIZURES) OUTSIDE PARAGUAY
WHICH CONCLUSIVELY PROVED THE "PARAGUAYAN CONNECTION",
OUR JOB IN STIMULATING ACTION BY PRESIDENT STROESSNER
AND OTHERWISE INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION HERE WOULD
BE GREATLY FACILITATED. TO THAT END, I PLACE
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EQUALLY HIGH PRIORITY ON THE PRESENT INTELLIGENCE
COLLECTION EFFORT IN PARAGUAY BY THE USG, AND AWAIT
EARLY POSITIVE RESULTS.

3. I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GO ON RECORD
AS WELCOMING THE STRONG SUPPORT MY MISSION IS BEING
PROVIDED BY AMBASSADOR VANCE AND HIS STAFF, BY DEA,
AND BY OTHER INTERESTED AGENCIES OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

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